

MINUTES DRAFT  
Of the January 14, 2009  
Woods Bay/Bigfork 440 Working Group  
Held at 10:00 am Saddlehorn Office, Bigfork

Committee Members Present: Steve Brady, George Darrow, Kitty Rich, Clarice Ryan, Anne Moran, Jim Frizzell

Committee Members Absent: Greg Poncin, Dan Vincent, Donna Lawson, Kevin Gownley, Tracy Reiling (Secretary)

Guests: Bill Myers, Steve Lorch (DNRC), Kelli Gownley (attending on Kevin's behalf and acting as Recording Secretary)

George called the meeting to order. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

Kitty pointed out that she had had some issues with her email address, and wanted to insure it was correct. Anne reported that Greg was had to attend a Fire Aviation meeting.

The 7 goals were reiterated:

1. Compensation to Beneficiary
2. Land Management/Access – Timber, Weeds, Recreation
3. Fire Safety – Fuel Reduction
4. Education – Living Classroom
5. Preservation of Wildlife Corridors and uniqueness of area
6. No Development
7. Do this in a timely manner

We recognize different solutions/combinations of solutions may be most effective to address:

The Short-Term Need  
The Intermediate Need  
The Long-term Need

Discussion followed on the USFS land exchange option. Anne reported that after consideration, DNRC management does not want to entertain accepting the two parcels initially proposed for a USFS land exchange process, however they would consider other parcels, perhaps in the USFS "Island Unit" or elsewhere. Steve Brady and Anne discussed exploring other parcels, benefits of exchange, remoteness of parcels, goals that make sense for both agencies, and that all parcels have a value. Steve reported that discussion between Greg and him had explored the USFS "Island Unit" and lands surrendered [surrounded?] by Plum Creek; grizzly habitat issues were mentioned and a possibility of lands at Ashley Lake.

Anne gave figures on the 1999 value of \$1.1 -3 million and a very rough 2009 value of \$8,500-\$11,500 per acre...\$2.75-5 million, appraised as if the property had access

(DNRC's standard process). She emphasized that this is not a formal appraisal, just a rough figure obtained from the State's appraiser on possible values for the property. Jim feels estimate is extremely high, and the group concurred that we may be seeing dropping values for the property given the current market.

Bill questioned the figures' reality since the are valued with access and the parcel does not have it. Anne reviewed the DNRC process on this. Discussion followed on buying access. Steve L. and Anne M. discussed the idea that DNRC can engage in purchasing rights-of-way (but this is not the same as purchasing a contiguous parcel and the two should not be confused).

Further discussion occurred on the Owen Sowerwine area, and the recognition that values for that property would be very different as it is unbuildable "bottom land."

Bill suggested using County access on Redgate Drive...discussion followed on the prohibitive expense of road construction there and related challenges due to topography.

Anne again reviewed the possibilities of different approaches to meet the short-term, intermediate-term, and long-term goals. Jim discussed his concern of DNRC liabilities from fire since they have declined a temporary access.

Discussion followed on the market not being favorable at this time for timber harvest.

Steve B. commented on the USFS position to help in the event of wildfire and discussion occurred on how jurisdiction on wildlands fire response is mapped. Can the land owners take a position to force the state to have to use the temporary access. Steve L. talked about ideas for cleanup options and discussed various ways of raising funds. George feels that it is up to the state to set a example for the land owners to follow. George questioned Steve L. on the Owen Sowerwine area...Steve L. says that if the State sells a conservation easement, they sell it at full value.

Discussion followed over whether a federal agency can purchase trust lands, and the rough percentage of value is development rights (could be 50-95%).

Anne circulated a copy of the Owen Sowerwine land authorization and reviewed some specifics.

Discussion followed on multi-purpose use, preservation of wildlife corridor, different levels of timber management, Owen Sowerwine land authorization value (\$600--\$700), 10 year land use license (lease must be consistent with purpose of land use, property originated as a lease).

Bill suggested getting more than 1 group involved. Bill read over the Natural Areas Act of 1974...George stressed its importance. Discussion followed over the issue of compensation, and Anne noted that there is both a Montana Attorney General's opinion and later legislation that clarify that Natural Areas must be compensated for. George again stressed his position on the Natural Areas Act.

Feb 3rd 10:00 @ Saddelhorn for the next meeting